

=THE BANDWAGON=

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YANKEE ROBINSON CIRCUS - Season 1866

By Tom Parkinson, CHS.

Forty horses pulled the "Golden Swan Chariot" as the Yankee Robinson Circus pulled out of Winter quarters at Decatur, Illinois, on May 1st 1866. And Fayette Lodawick "Yankee" Robinson proudly led his cavalcade astride a speckled horse and carrying a gold headed cane.

The favorite mid-western show had spent the winter in what is now Fairview Park and on that date opened the tenth season since Robinson first erected his tent -- one he made himself -- in nearby Quincy.

This procession moved down West Main street towards the center of town after a slight delay when the elephant refused to set foot on a rickety little bridge. The circus was not leaving all of Decatur behind for during its stay in the central Illinois city it had recruited the services of local twins by the name of Evans who were to be billed for the coming season as the Wild Australian Albinoes.

Two weeks later Yankee Robinson Circus had made its way to Quincy and after the performance there on May 14th, the Quincy Herald reported, "The Great Yankee Robinson Circus has at last arrived and our big ones and little ones will now rest content having seen the great High-Yankee-Dank. Besides many cages, chariots, wagons, etc., the procession was headed by the magnificent forty-horse-band-car, which in itself was a sight worth seeing".

By June 12, the show had made its way to Chicago and great crowds filled the tents located on the Lake Shore at the foot of Randolph St. The Tribune, Republican News, Times and Journal commented on the show saying "The cry is still they come. They enter half eager, half expectant. Their anxiety is relieved, their expectations fully gratified". The great exhibitions of the veteran showman still continue to attract large crowds". A Mr. Dingess was mentioned as General Agent. George Cole was Treasurer, and Charley Parker as Clown.

The circus was in Wisconsin during July of 1866 and the Milwaukee Press had this to say in part, "Yankee Robinson's great show came today. The procession was a mile in length....Yank knows how to run a circus and will be in full blast today and tomorrow at the Second Ward Park. Yankee Robinson appears July 9th at Green Bay and from there is steering for the states of Iowa and Minnesota".

Robinson had one dromedary and one elephant -- a small one -- and according to the Milwaukee paper the bull's act was "excellent, showing great agility". A newspaper article of two years later tells that this show displayed about twenty cages so the number was probably near that during the season of 1866 as well.

Six years after receiving such high praise from mid-western newspapers, Old Yankee Robinson was broke and his show had disappeared. His name was nearly forgotten. It was next heard in 1884 when the Yankee Robinson Great Show, Ringling Bros., Carnival of Novelties, and DeNar's Museum of Living Wonders began to post its bills in Yankee's old territory. In September of that year the famous and favourite old circus man died and was buried at Jefferson, Iowa.

Note on Yankee Robinson photo accompanying the above article: Although at first glance it does not seem that there are forty horses on the bandwagon, close inspection will reveal that the full advertised num-

Yankee Robinson Circus - concluded.

ber is present. They are in ten ranks of four. The outside horse of the second rank from the wagon is difficult to see; however, it will be noted that there are ten distinct shadows on the ground. The elephant and the dromedary are also visible.

The mounted man in the foreground is presumed to be Yankee Robinson. Although this man seems to have a full beard and other photos of Robinson show him to be clean shaven, a contemporary newspaper article said that Yankee led the procession on a speckled horse and that he carried a cane.

This picture was discovered in the files of the local newspaper which saved it because one of the children watching the parade later became a prominent banker.

The author wishes to thank Henry Lofgren, W.H. Woodcock, and the Decatur Herald Review for information and assistance.

Editor's Note: Certainly the thanks of the CHS members is due to Tom for this fine historical article, and for his kindness in loaning us the original negative from which a print is enclosed for each member. This is a rare circus title, and one on which little is known in the early days. We hope to print more like this later.

"THE AUCTION BLOCK"

As previously reported - the bidding on the Holiday Offerings in this popular department was very brisk, and all items were picked up at reasonable prices by members. Do not fail to put in your bid on one or more of the following:

Lot No. 1 - Victor Record used by Terrell Jacobs Wild Animal Show during 1942. "Under the Double Eagle" - March, by Sousa's Band. Donated by Terrell Jacobs. (allow extra amount for packing & mailing).

Lot No. 2 - Three - 5x7" panelled enlargements - Dan Rice Estate (see article in December Bandwagon). Dan's Home; and two Summer houses on Estate. Fine. Donated by Frank Norton C.H.S.

Lot No. 3 - 10 - season 1942 - Cole Bros., Circus photos - Donated by Don Smith CHS.

Lot No. 4 - Book "Struggles and Triumphs" of P.T. Barnum - 1879 - Binding not perfect, but text complete. Bid accordingly. Donated by Walter W. Tyson, CHS.

Bids will be held open until February 27th. Do not send any money with your bid. Send all bids to the Secretary, J.B. Lyon, 22-A Charles St., Guelph, Ont., Canada, who will advise you when to remit.

ROXIE, Powers' Elephant Act Leader, Dies: Roxie, two and one half ton member of the Powers quartet of elephants, died night of February 3rd in the garage at the home of Mayor Manson L. Reichert, at Evansville, Ind. The elephant had been ill for over a month and had to be moved about with a garage service truck-derrick. Many members no doubt will have seen this act several times. Roxie was 88 years old, and had been in the act for almost sixty years. She was the oldest of the four elephants in the act - and the smallest. Powers Act has been famous in Europe and the U.S.A. for three generations, the act having been handed down through the Powers' Family. - This little bit of news is sent to the Editor by Al.G.Marriott, surviving member of the Famous Marriott Twins, and now manager of the aerial act, Los Aereos, Mr. Marriott was born in Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

CHECK LIST OF PRINCIPAL CIRCUS ARTICLES AND ASSOCIATED SUBJECTS IN MAGAZINES (Year 1942).

Continued from Christmas Issue --- By: Burt L. Wilson C.H.S.

This list is compiled by months: - - - -

APRIL

Boss Rigger - Article on Curly Lill R.B.B.B.
New Yorker - 4 - 25042

Kitty Clark of the Circus 6 pages text and pictures by
Parade Sun. - 4 - 12 - 42 Loomis Dean

They're Pals 1 page picture Charles Pitney and
Parade Sun. - 4 - 28 - 42 Chimpanzee

"Jumbos" 3 pages Pictures and text of Cheer-
Pic. - 4 - 28 - 42 ful Gardner.

Three Ring Rehearsal 2 pages Color Photos - Sarasota,
N.Y. Times - Sun. Mag. 4. -12 - 42 Fla.

Circus 2 pages pictures and Text.
Vogue - 4 - 15 - 42

Roberto de Vasconcellos R.B.B.B. Front Cover - Pictures
Rider & Driver - April 1942

Circus at Home Alice S. Morris
Harpers Bazaar - April 1942 Visit to Sarasota with photos

Spring has Come N.Y. Opening
Time 4 - 20 - 42 1 page Ill.

MAY

Circus Flasher Al. Francois
The Camera - May 1942 Photographing the Circus

Outstanding Smart Animals Warden LaRoe
The Camera - May 1942 Photographing animals

Trade Winds Bennett Cert
Sat, Review of Literature 5-30-42 Short art. on N.Y. Opening

Hold That Tiger 4 page article on Alfred Court
Liberty - May 2nd, 1942

Shooting the Big Top Loomis Dean
Popular Photography Circus Photography

Minute Man J. Bryan Ill
Colliers - May 2nd 1942 Article on Doll Family - Midgets

Mars Joins the Circus 1 page & Ill.
News Week - May 4th 1942 New York Opening

There Goes Igor 1 page
New Yorker - May 2nd 1942 Article on Merle Evans

Circus School Clifford E. Butcher
Sat. Even. Post May 18th 1942 Manitowoc Wiso. Training School.

Here Comes the Circus J. Bryan Ill
Look - May 5th 1942 Sarasota, Fla. Winter quarters -
pictures & Text

The Smartest Seals are College Grads. 2 page Pictures on Mark Ruling
Spot - May 1942 Seal Trainer

Cut Up 1 page Picture of Danny McBride's
American Magazine May 1942 Son - Clown in make-up

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY'S MAIL BAG.

Ken Amadon CHS recently visited with Arthur LaFleur who years ago was with Gollmar Bros., Circus. LaFleur was playing at the vaudeville House in Manchester, N.H.

Bill Green, Jr., CHS reports that he is up to his neck with CHS letterheads and other printing orders.

Members will no doubt have read in the Billboard of the passing of Capt. Seymour, Superintendent of Cole Bros. Circus. A letter of sympathy has already been written to his widow and family, on behalf of CHS.

Bob Parkinson CHS submitted a copy of his circus Collectica Inventory to your Editor. Congratulations, Bob - this is a good thing to have. The list shows over 1776 items, including 500 or more photos, and many other interesting items.

Burns Kattenberg CHS, visited with Ernie Stewart when the latter played a night club in Mansfield, O., and showed Ernie his collection. Stewart was with King Bros. Circus last season.

Bob Green CHS is reported to be recovering from pneumonia. Members will be glad to know that he is up and around again.

Chas. Campbell CHS is having an article on Circus Wrecks prepared which will appear in an early issue of Railroad Magazine. This article is to be headed by a photo of the Al.G. Barnes Wreck of 1930 in New Brunswick, Canada.

E.W. Cripps CHS in a recent letter stated "Astor Pictures have acquired for distribution in the United States and will likely be shown in Canada as well, the picture "King of the Circus". This picture was produced in England about five years ago and was released at that time in England by Paramount Pictures but was not sold over here until this time. Gregory Ratoff wrote the story and its principal players are John Loder; Benita Hume, directed by Monty Banks. It was released in U.S.A. December 26th". Other circus movies reported by this same member are Paramount -- "Speaking of Animals", "In the Zoo" and "In the Circus". 20th Century Fox -- "A Day at the Zoo". Universal Pictures -- "The Candy Kid - with Capt. Keller's Lion Act". Members should be on the watch for these showings.

Rollie Metzner CHS - a new member - reports that during the presentation of the Shrine Circus in Sheboygan, Wiso., he took tickets, and gives a good report of the performance. Rollie is acquainted with the Lindeman Bros., former owners and operators of Seils-Sterling Circus.

Chas. Davitt CHS - who was with Sparks Circus for some time in 1926 writes that at that time the show carried three 8-horse, five 6-horse, two 4-horse and three train teams, and travelled on twenty cars.

Harry Parkhurst, well known old time Elephant man of Peru, Ind., reports having met up with Capt. Wm. Emery during Shrine Show in Philadelphia in October last. They were together in that same city 50 years ago as young elephant boys on the Forepaugh Circus. Mr. Parkhurst has kindly offered to write some stories for the Bandwagon, and one of these already received will appear at an early date.

All bids for the Auction are not acknowledged but all successful bidders are notified by mail immediately the closing day of auction has passed.

George Kelly CHS - retired railway Engineer was guest at a complimentary banquet recently on the occasion of his Fiftieth Anniversary as a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers. Member Kelly was presented with a very beautiful jewel.

WANT photos of parade, ticket wagons or trucks. Also circus data such as number of flats, stocks, elephants, size of tents, featured acts, etc.

Address all mail to:

Tom Parkinson, 311 E. Daniel St.,
Champaign, Ill.

WANTED - Old Circus programs,
route books and lithographs.

"BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS"

Tedd Meyer - Box 175 -

Grand Island, Nebr. - CHS. 40.

WANTED

Photos of Circus Wrecks and fires. I have photos of the R.B. B.B. fire in Cleveland, O., and I would like to have photos of other fires.

Will you send me your list?

All those who have sent lists will receive an answer later as I am very busy at present.

Leonard A. Quist

R.D. 2 - Box 240.

Greensburg, Pennsylvania.
CHS 50

CENTER RING

America's Newest Circus Paper
"Spring Special ready March 1st.
-- featuring --

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FAMOUS WINTER QUARTERS - Pt. 1
by Bill Kasiska "Baraboo"
latest big top news and gossip
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SPECIAL ... Set of 10 \$1.00

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Set of 8 -- $3\frac{1}{2}$ by $4\frac{1}{2}$ \$1.20
Make all Center Ring and picture
replies to: Geo. Hubler,
Beta House. . . Oxford. . . Ohio.

When answering ads
be sure
to say that
you
"SAW IT IN THE BAND WAGON".

New Members

Since the Holiday issue of the Bandwagon, the following new members have joined our Society.

No. 54 - Donald H. Shepherd, 82 Carlton Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J.

55 - Charles A. Davitt, 75 Caseland St., Springfield, Mass.

56 - Bob Parkinson, 336 N. Oak Crest, Decatur, Ill.

57 - Maurice Allaire, 8 Weymouth St., Basement Apt., Portland, Maine.

58 - Roland Metzner, 720 North 8th St., Sheboygan, Wisc.

LAST CALL -- This is a reminder to any of the members who have not yet sent the information for the proposed new and enlarged Membership List, to the Secretary. DO IT NOW!